# USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

# THE MILITARY PROFESSION: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN VALUES COLLIDE?

By

Colonel Joseph J. Frazier United States Army

Doctor James Gordon Project Adviser

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#### **ABSTRACT**

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The United States Military continues to stress the importance of values for all who don the uniform in voluntary military service. However, values training and education has taken a back seat to the demands and operational tempo of current military operations. This is a formula for disaster when new generations of volunteers from American society join the military with different values, morals, and ethical development.

This paper explores the problem surrounding the values of America's youth and suggests what we as a nation must do to better prepare young men and women for quality citizenship and the capability of leading our country. Data from studies of Baby Boomer, X and Y generations will be extrapolated to compare them to the values espoused by today's professional military services. Preliminary findings indicate that major differences in values exist among each generation and how they perceive the life as a whole. From these differences evidence also suggests incidents involving sex, harassment, race, money, and "Abu Ghraib" scandals will increase as the military profession continues to rely on current society to fill its ranks. Values education must be reinforced to combat this probable dilemma using creative, diverse, and innovative program designs and delivery strategies.

### THE MILITARY PROFESSION: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN VALUES COLLIDE?

As future generations enter into the military profession (Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard), military leaders must be cognizant of the widening gap between the values espoused by the military and American society at large. Zemke, Raines, and Filipczak captured the essence of this modern dilemma in their book entitled *Generations at Work*. In their book they said, "There is a growing realization that the gulf of misunderstanding and resentment between older, not so old, and younger employees in the workplace is growing and problematic. It is a rift that will not heal itself or just go away, as many organizations – those even aware of it – fervently hope." The military profession is beginning to face the same rift today - a rift over generational values. Eventually, because of this difference, America will have to respond to a critical question: How can this nation influence the value system of its children to ensure a future generation exists that possesses the core values needed for better citizenship--values compatible with military service?

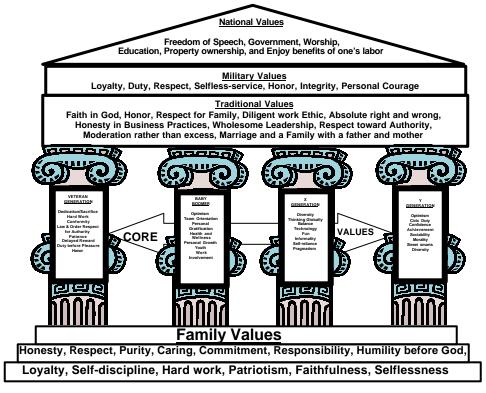


FIGURE 1

Figure 1 was designed to describe the conceptual foundation of America's value system.<sup>2</sup> This figure was created from several source documents used throughout this paper and will aid readers in the discussion on generational groups (Baby boomers, Generation X, and Y) and their differing values. The intent of this paper is to persuade the reader that a conflict is on the horizon between the current military leadership and future individuals entering the service. It is a conflict that will be new to the military profession; yet old to corporate America since businesses today are facing this struggle now. The conflict will result in a showdown over core values. This paper will identify the generational group that primarily makes up the military profession today and the future groups that will inherit the military. Along with identifying the groups, this paper will attempt to summarize the enormous trait and characteristic data that exists on these generational groupings with specific emphasis on the traits identified as "core values." Next, the paper will delve into the social environment that is now shaping each generation. More specifically, the paper will examine the possible impacts of the social environment. This examination will provide the threads that will pull the reader through the difference in the core values of each generation to shape a possible conclusion. Finally, the paper will compare the current military profession's core values with that of the future generational groups in an attempt to establish some future strategic outcomes.

This paper is not intended to be alarmist. But it is intended to demonstrate the need for concern with the differences in values of America's society and its military. Data currently exists that demonstrates the need to review this issue carefully. Unfortunately, these data are being captured in parallel streams that never cross. Throughout my research, no comparisons were found that attempted to cross the streams to predict a future outcome. This paper will attempt this.

This is the premise. The Baby Boomer generation, the primary generation making up the military profession, generally still espouses traditional values. However, Generation X and Y, the future of the military profession, "generally" are growing up in an environment of major social change in which traditional values are not being taught and/or the meaning is skewed. A collision of values is imminent. Consider carefully the cost of this collision through this example.

A young boy of the X or Y generation is taken from a dysfunctional home by social services. He is placed in another home (dysfunctional but unknown by social services) and molested up through the age of high school. He's had problems at school bullying people, fighting, and even a few run-ins with the police but all were dismissed by the overworked social services as immaturity and his adjustment to life. He has no friends at school, never been to a church, never had a girlfriend, heavy acne, but a whiz at computers and electronics. Yet he is a

survivor; a strong boy that has put everything in the back of his mind with the hopes of just escaping his world. One day an opportunity to escape comes in the form of an opportunity to join the military profession, such as the example of the New York Judge that offered the 20 year old a choice to join the Army or go to Jail.<sup>3</sup> Mentally locking away his past, he joins. He was cynical, independent, computer literate, and competitive. He made a good leader. He excelled quickly through the ranks but nothing was ever done to address or even talk about the pain of his past. But one day, stress hits more than usual, and his past is unleashed. He kills another service member. Leaders examined his plight and it became apparent that his past was ripe with indicators of problems. The indicators were ignored; traditional values had no meaning to him and no one paid attention.

This paper explores the problem surrounding the values of America's youth (problems our generation created) and suggests what we as a nation must do to better prepare young men and women for quality citizenship and the capability of leading our country. The need for this is captured by Hechter, Nadel, and Michod who wrote, "We are able to take for granted distinctions among objects and behaviors because by social consensus they are what we think they are. When consensus breaks down, then concepts (and hence the words that refer to them) become politicized, a struggle over meaning and morality takes place."

When social consensus breaks down, confusion over words and ideals ensue. This confusion necessitates the need for reinforcing our national values and reinforcing them amongst our nation's youth. Specifically, the confusion demonstrates how we must embrace the values of today's military since they are directly linked to our national values. As a nation, we must ensure that the prospective pool of military recruits possesses the values needed, not only for the future military profession, but for the survival of our nation as well.

### <u>Defining the Audience: Who Are the Baby Boomers, "X" and "Y" Generations</u>

To provide an understanding of the generational groups, Zemke, Raines, and Filipczak, identified these groups in the following time brackets:<sup>5</sup>

- The Veterans 1922-1943 (52 million people between the ages of 53 and 84)
- The Baby Boomers 1943-1960 (73 million people between the ages of 45 and 53)
- Generation Xers 1960-1980 (70.1 million people between the ages of 16 and 45)
- Generation "Y" 1980-2000 (69.7 million people between the ages of 16 and the present)

A corresponding age group has been added based on behavioral traits that accompany the time periods which reflects current research. Zemke, Raines, and Filipczak, recognized that

other researchers adjusted the time periods of the generational groups against other criteria. For example Neil Yamashiro, writing solely on Generation X, felt that Xers were born between 1965 and 1977. Leonard Wong, writing on both the Xers and Boomers, agreed with Zemke, Raines, and Filipczak generational groupings but wrote "Different researchers have adjusted these dates 5 or 6 years in either direction ..." But in general, the age variance between the groups is insignificant compared to the actual study of each group's specific behavioral traits. At this point, any further mention of the Veteran group will be excluded since this group is beyond the hiring age of the military and therefore has no role in this paper. I will begin with a general discussion of the behavioral traits of the boomers, Xers, and Nexters or "y" generations.

Wong describes the Boomers as the generation that worked relentlessly in pursuit of goals, often at the expense of marriages, family, and personal lives. Boomer women began to enter the workforce which reinforced the independence characterized by Boomers. The use of day care and nannies allowed parents to work 60-hour workweeks. Work became more than just putting food on the table; it became their reason for existence." Zemke, Raines, and Filipczak adds, "this is the generation that would rather not be seen as the "problem" in the workplace, though they frequently are and the generation that suggests they never meet a problem they could not bluff, blunder, or power through, and then pronounce themselves master of and write a book about it.9

Next, Wong describes the Xers as the generation that arrived on the scene unnoticed. Sometimes called the Slackers, Baby Busters, Twenty-something, or the MTV generation, Xers developed a cynical, pragmatic, survivor mentality as they experienced a world much less idyllic than their Boomer predecessors. Watergate, Three Mile Island, Operation DESERT STORM, and Rodney King shaped their thinking in their early years. With Boomer parents overworked and focused on accomplishing personal goals, Generation X children were often neglected and overlooked."

Zemke, Raines, and Filipczak suggest that this is the generation that is technologically adept, clever, resourceful, and willing to work in the same electronic warehouse from dawn until dusk.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, Wong wrote Generation Y - the Nintendo Generation, Generation 2001, or Generation Next brings a totally different perspective than Xers or Boomers." Zemke, Raines, and Filipczak suggest this generation is among the smartest, cleverest, healthiest, most-wanted *Homo sapiens* to have ever walked the face of the earth. However, later in this paper as we begin to look at this generation from the standpoint of the values they received from their Xer parents, some problems will be apparent.

Some key items to understand about these generational groups are the traits that set them apart, shaped by the environment that they grew up in. For example, Wong suggests, "Xers developed a skeptical nature about authority as people and institutions let them down repeatedly. They watched President Nixon resign in disgrace and President Clinton defend himself on the Senate floor using an argument about the definition of the term "is." Whereas the Boomers' hopes soared eternal with the first lunar landing, Xers hopes were shattered as they watched the Challenger explode on their schoolroom TV screens. They waited for the "quality time" with their parents that seldom came and learned to trust only themselves. To Xers, authority was to be earned, not declared by position or official sanction."14 Wong continued his analysis and generalized, "Two factors heavily impacted the childhood years of Xers. First, soaring Boomer divorce rates meant Xers did not have the nurturing environment enjoyed by the Boomers. Instead, visitation rights and joint custody became the norm as over 40 percent of the Xers spent time in a single-parent home by age 16. Second, as women entered the workforce in increasing numbers, Xers became the ultimate latchkey children. Being alone and fending for themselves, the young Xers learned to rely on themselves and developed a confidence often misinterpreted as arrogance. Yearning for the bonds normally found in a family, Xers learned to seek out a circle of friends for relationships."15

Wong, in a paper focused on the Army concluded, "Events such as the Army's downsizing, Somalia, "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," and Aberdeen shaped the attitudes and views of Generation X officers." Their skeptical attitudes toward authority, already influenced by events prior to entering the Army, were further affected by the court martial of the Sergeant Major of the Army, the reprimand of Major General Hale, and general-on-general sexual harassment." <sup>16</sup>

Understanding the environment that shapes each generation is critical as it will have major impacts on the youths that will inherit the military profession and the responsibilities that go with it. Russ Shafer-Landau, author of the book entitled *What ever happened to Good and Evil*, said, "A person's rationality is entirely a matter of satisfying their desires and advancing their interests. In particular, there can be no reason for you to undertake a sacrifice, or forgo indulging your desires, unless there is the promise of gaining some greater good in the long run. Philosophers call this idea **rational egoism**...."

The opposite of this position is identified as "Ethical egoism; the claims that there is just a single, ultimate moral duty – to look out for Number One. Anything else is immoral."

These two philosophical ideas seem to permeate the current beliefs of the generations coming after the Boomer generation. These ideas only become a problem when one believes authors like Richard Means, author of The *Ethical Imperative* who commented, "The danger lies in what man thinks he is, for this may shape what

he becomes." <sup>19</sup> Now that the generational groups are identified, along with some of the past events that have shaped them, a review of the current environment and its impact on these groups will be discussed.

# Framing the Future Generation's Environment: Examining What We Know Today

Consider, on any given day in America simply turning on the news or opening the newspaper reveals a startling trend of crime and chaos permeating the lives of our youths. This daily crime and violence is affecting the population the military profession needs to sustain its future. Consider the following examples and facts.

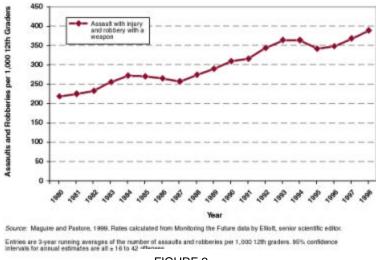


FIGURE 2

In Figure 2, the Surgeon General depicts trends in incident rates of serious violence among 12th graders, assault with injury, and robbery with a weapon combined between the years 1980-1998.<sup>20</sup> In his report to the President, the Surgeon General reported that arrest rates of young people for homicide and other violent crimes skyrocketed from 1983 to 1993. In response to the dramatic increase in the number of murders committed by young people, Congress and many state legislatures passed new gun control laws, established boot camps, and began waiving children as young as 10 out of the juvenile justice system and into adult criminal courts. <sup>21</sup> It is important to note that the youth making up these statistics are the X and Y Generations.

Next, Figure 3 shows the documented arrest rates of youths age 10-17 for serious violent crime, by type of crime from 1980-1999. The Surgeon General said, "The sheer magnitude of

the increase in arrest rates between 1983 and 1993/1994 is striking. Overall, arrest rates of youths for violent offenses grew by about 70 percent."<sup>22</sup> Again, we are looking at numbers from the X and Y Generations.

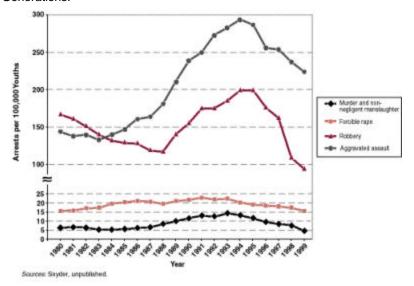


FIGURE 3

Now consider the following example news stories. These news stories are important because of the generations they represent, the victims and the families affected, and the external friends of those committing the crime and those of which the crime was committed.

- 2006: A 19 and 17 year old escaped from prison after stabbing a guard 15 times. The 17 year old was incarcerated for killing a child he was babysitting; the 19 year old raped and killed a 39 year old woman.<sup>23</sup>
- 2006: Two 18 and a 17 year old were arrested in separated incidents of aggravated assault and murder of homeless people in Florida.<sup>24</sup>
- 2006: Five 17 and 18 year olds were sentenced for beating and attempting to lynch a black teen in South Carolina.<sup>25</sup>
- 2005: A 13 year old molested a 7 year old in one of Detroit's public library bathrooms.<sup>26</sup>
- 2005: Two 14 and 15 year old boys are accused of raping a 15 year old girl in a vacant school in Michigan.<sup>27</sup>
- 2002: A 16 year old was arrested for killing a high-profile attorney's wife by savagely beating her to death and then carving a cross in her body.<sup>28</sup>

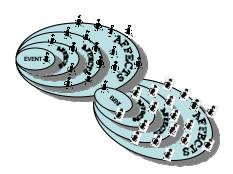
• 2001: A 15 year old took a shot gun and killed his grandparents while they slept. <sup>29</sup>
This list serves only as a snap shot of the thousands of incidents across America occurring daily. Other high profile examples, like the Columbine High School shooting in which 13 students died and 23 people were wounded; now only serve the memories of those affected. Howard Ehrlich, writing an essay on Social Anarchism, documented, "...approximately 4,500 youngsters are killed every year in intentional shootings, with thirty percent of the number probable suicides." In 2004, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP) documented in a report on teen violence, 877,700 young people, ages 10-24, were injured in violent acts in 2002; and approximately 1 in 3 required hospitalizations. The report further stated in 2001 that 5,486 young people, ages 10 to 24, were murdered and 79% of homicide victims in the same age range were killed with firearms. Finally, a 2004 nation-wide survey documented 17% of students reported carrying a firearm, 33% reported being in a physical fight one or more times in 12 months, and 9% reported being hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by their boyfriend or girlfriend in the 12 months prior to the survey. <sup>31</sup>

Considering these data, it appears that something is wrong or out of balance in our society. Could the problem be an issue with our "cultural norms" which shape our values? Cultural norms are the standard, model, or pattern a specific culture, race, ethnic, religious, or social group regards as typical. Cultural norms include thoughts, behaviors, and patterns of communications, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions.<sup>32</sup> Colonel Maxine McFarland suggests, "Culture, which is learned and shared by members of a group, is presented to children as their social heritage." McFarland's supposition applies to a generation of people who were actively trying to pass their thoughts, behaviors, and patterns of communication, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions to their children; homes that provided role models to emulate. But in many cases across America, the homes McFarland described no longer exist. As these homes disappear, many of the cultural norms McFarland identifies never make it to a large portion of the American population. Instead, youth get a new set of values from whomever or whatever replaces their parents. So if not from the parents, where are the values coming from?

McFarland believes, "Everyone has a culture that shapes how they see others, the world, and themselves. Like an iceberg, some of the aspects of culture are visible; others are beneath the surface. Invisible aspects influence and cause visible ones."<sup>33</sup> Today, in many homes across America, youth are being shaped by the music and television culture that portrays life in a sound byte surreal fashion. Music videos and television characters portray youth issues that are quickly identifiable, developed, and resolved in minutes. These "virtual"

characters explore all the cultural norms McFarland identifies and more in between commercials. The events of the virtual character are typically demonstrated with negative behaviors, values, customs, thoughts, etc... In the programs and videos, youth respond to youth with violence, bad language, rebellious actions, and body gestures. In the virtual world, removing the antagonist by force or death is always an option; and when exercised is often graphically shown. Richard Means, author of *The Ethical Imperative* commented, "...there is growing evidence accumulated by psychologists that viewing violence creates a higher level of aggressive behavior than not viewing violence....In carefully controlled experiments, he found that those who watched violence in films were more likely to participate in aggressive acts afterwards."

Families that lack positive role models or parents, often produce youth that develop false realities for dealing with life situations. False realities create cynicism in youths that leads to rebellion in the home. Neil Yamashiro suggests, "This cynicism, according to many educators, socialists, and researchers, has created in the Xers an unrealistic, unhealthy even distorted view of reality. Crime, acts of violence, prominent figures (political, sports or military) involved in drugs, sex, or other scandalous incidents are commonplace in the media today and in the minds of Xers." Additionally, James Youngquist author of an Army War College paper entitled, American vs. U.S. Army Values: Direction of Society's Values and Implications for the 21 st Century Army wrote, "Single-parent households, child abuse, and deteriorating inner-city schools are all factors that have significant influence on youth violence and are getting worse."36 Chaplain Geraldine Manning, in her paper entitled, The Military of Tomorrow: Military Values and America's Youth, wrote, "And as our social morality deteriorates, life becomes harsher and less civil for everyone. High levels of violence, disintegration of the family, and poor race relations are just a few of the woes we now endure because of the decline." The challenge with Generations X and Y is how they use what they learn to deal with others. Positive and negative behavior, reinforced over time, can easily be passed on only to be repeated by a future



generation. This is depicted in Figure 4 which shows that everyone affects someone, who affects someone, who affects someone and the cycle continues good or bad<sup>38</sup>.

Consider another example occurring with Generation X and Y and the possible inferred implications: A recent teen poll indicated "Desperate Housewives" and "Sex in the City" were

FIGURE 4

in the top ten most watched teen shows. Now consider the statistics of the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation that found in the top 20 shows teens viewed, 83% included some sexual content, 49% had sexual behavior, and 20% had intercourse. The survey points out, at this stage, two-thirds of America's teenagers are having sex by the time they graduate from high school; and 1 in 5 sexually active girls get pregnant.<sup>39</sup> In 1996, there were indicators of a growing problem with youths having children.

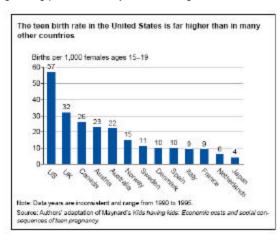


FIGURE 5

Figure 5 shows teen births in the U.S. compared to other countries from 1990 to 1995. 40 The chart's author indicates that the data years are inconsistent. However, the chart indicates over the five year period, 15-19 year old girls gave births to 57,000 babies. This number shows 25,000 more babies than the UK and 53,000 more than Japan. Further, the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, in 2001, found that nearly 7.5 million children ages 5-14 are on their own in the

morning and afternoon before and after the school bell rings. ... The result: millions of youths are on their own, especially between the hours of 3 and 8 p.m., prime time for young people to engage in risky behavior. Statistics clearly show that rates of juvenile crime, drug use, and experimentation with tobacco, alcohol, and sex increase in the afternoon hours — when many children and youth are unsupervised. McFarland would call these examples part of the cultural norms beneath the surface. However, based on current media coverage, these examples of cultural norms are dominating American society. Even more sadly, popular television shows are conveying that these trends are merely common aspects of life.

Before cultural norms are established, there has to be some foundational belief and assumptions within a youth that allows the norms to take root. In the early 1980's, social psychologist Edgar Schein theorized that, "culture existed on three levels: on the surface we find artifacts [traits that can be seen or identified], underneath artifacts lies values and behavioral norms, and at the deepest level lies a core of believes and assumptions." Based on Schein's theory, if a youth believes that his or her parents do not care for him, the youth will find a substitute parent or role model to fill his needs. But it goes beyond this. According to

Schein, "beliefs and assumptions form the core of an organization's culture. Assumptions represent what members believe to be reality and thereby influence what they perceive and how they think and feel."

From the statements above, the organization is representative of a youth's home. What the youth believes influences what he or she perceives, thinks, and feels about his or home. Continuing with this logic, Schein suggests, "Values constitute the basis for making judgments about what is right and what is wrong, which is why they are also referred to as a moral or ethical code. Because values are used as standards for making judgments, they are often associated with strong emotions." In the case of the youth, values are formed purely from what the youth believes and perceives. From the youth's beliefs and perceptions, value judgments are made and as Schein suggest – with strong emotion. An example of this could be seen by the growing number of America's youth using profanity in public and often perceived to be loud and angry. Additionally, when a parent attempts to talk or correct the youth on any subject, their knowledge is rejected by the youth using outwards physical expressions of emotion and tension. This is a generalization of course.

Youths growing up in stable homes are critical to the future military profession. Even the

	Risk i			
Domain	Early Onset (age 6–11)	Late Onset (age 12–14)	Protective Factor*	
Individual	General offenses Substance use Being male Aggression** Psychological condition Hyperactivily Problem (antisocial) behavior Exposure to television violence Medical, physical Low IQ Antisocial attitudes, beliefs Dishonesly**	General offenses Psychological condition Restlessness Difficulty concentrating* Risk taking Aggression* Being male Physical violence Antisocial attitudes, beliefs Crimes against persons Problem (antisocial) behavior Low IQ Substance use	Intolerant attitude toward deviance High IO Being female Positive social orientation Perceived sanctions for transgressions	
Family	Low socioeconomic status/poverty Aniisocial parents Poor parent-child relations Harsh, lax, or inconsistent discipline Broken home Separation from parents Other conditions Abusive parents Neglect	Poor parent-child relations Harsh, lax discipline; poor moniloring, supervision Low parental involvement Antisocial parents Broken home Low socioeconomic status/poverty Abussve parents Other conditions Family conflict**	Warm, supportive relationships with parents or other adults Parents' positive evaluation of peers Parental monitoring	
School	Poor attilude, performance	Poor atlitude, performance Academic failure	Commitment to school Recognition for Involvement in conventional activities	
Peer Group	Weak social fles Anlisocial peers	Week social ties Antisocial, delinqueni peers Gang membership	Friends who engage in conventional behavior	
Community		Neighborhood crime, drugs Neighborhood disorganization		

Surgeon General of the U.S. recognizes this fact. In his report to the President, he provided a chart of "Risk Factors" that has been widely accepted for identifying problems with today's American youth. And the military must pay attention as it will be the benefactor of many of these youth that decide to come into the military profession.

Figure 6 was presented to the President by the Surgeon

<sup>\*</sup> Age of onset not known.

<sup>&</sup>quot; Males only

General in a report on youth violence.<sup>45</sup> This chart identifies recognized risk factors associated with troubled youth by age group. The chart breaks down those risk factors seen within the individual youth as well as his or her environment, i.e. the home, school, peer group, and community.

Conversely, the right column of the chart provides factors, identified as "Protective Factors" that can counteract the risk factors if present in the youth. The risk factors alone are believed to have direct links to the stability of their future.

### The Common Core Values of Today's United States Army and Generation X & Y

Now that the generational groups have been identified and the current environment in which they are growing up in has been established, let's look at the current values of the Army and those identified for the generational groups. As stated earlier, Army values are used in this paper since they are based on America's National values and generally encapsulate the values espoused by all other services. For the Army, the core values are:

- Loyalty (To bear true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, your unit, and other soldiers),
- **Duty** (To fulfill your obligations),
- Respect (To treat people as they should be treated),
- Selfless-service (To put the welfare of the nation, the Army, and subordinates before your own),
- Honor (To live up to all the Army values),
- Integrity To do what's right, legally and morally), and
- Personal Courage (To face fear, danger, or adversity).

In the pre-1990's the Army values were simply Duty, Honor, and Country. Walter Cramer, discussing the old values wrote, "The good repute of the officer corps is a responsibility shared by every officer. Each one stands in the light of his brother officer, and each shares in the honor and burden of leadership. Dedicated and selfless service to our country is a primary motivation. This makes our profession a way of life rather than just a job." Later, the values were expanded to the seven identified above but the philosophies behind them did not change. These values continue to reinforce an understanding that the military profession is a "way of life." One must understand that this concept applied to and resonated with the Boomer Generation; not X and Y Generations. Wong writes, "To a Generation Xer, being an Army officer is a noble profession. Nevertheless, to a Xer, it is not an all-consuming source of self-

identity."<sup>47</sup> So as the military profession absorbs Generation Xers and Y, it is possible some things may need to change.

Considering the information and the current environment provided above, it seems to correlate to James Youngquist's suggestion that, "The 20<sup>th</sup> century has seen a crumbling of moral teachings in schools. Four sociological theories; Darwinism, positivism, personal-ism, and pluralism come to mind. Darwinism led to seeing morality as being in flux. Positivism advocated morality as relative and private, a personal value judgment. Personal-ism emphasized individual rights and freedom over responsibility. Finally, pluralism raised the question of whose values should be taught. As a result of these theories, public schools have retreated from their role as value educators."

So when the family unit fails and schools retreat, the issue becomes, who is providing the values to our future generations and what are they?

Zemke, Raines, and Filipczak identified the core values, assets, and liabilities of the generational groups in their book entitled *Generations at Work*.<sup>49</sup> To show the reader their work, I have created a simple chart, Figure 7. I will not attempt to discuss all of the core values identified for each generational group, but suggest each reader compare these values to their own experiences. One must remember to take into consideration the environment each generation grew up in when one compares the values between the groups. For example one might quickly see a value like "loyalty" could be an issue within the current military profession. Wong writes, "Generation X officers see loyalty differently. ...Keep in mind that Generation X officers grew up in a society replete with downsizing and restructuring. ...Generation X junior officers are loyal, but their loyalty is based on a bond of trust between the Army and the officer—not on the promise of lifelong employment." However, Neil Yamashiro simply suggest, "On the contrary, they will continually seek ways to upgrade their lifestyle....They see themselves more as lifelong job hoppers than company loyalist."

Another example would be in the difference Boomers and Xers view the term "respect" with regard to seniority and authority. Boomers understand and know how to yield to senior member of the military; Xers, generally, do not. Wong, commenting on Xers writes, "It's not that Generation X officers are disrespectful; it is just that they are not impressed by rank or hierarchical position. They have been let down by too many authority figures ranging from their overworked parents to their Commander-in-Chief. As a result, they are extremely skeptical towards authority." <sup>52</sup>

	BABY BOOMERS	GENERATION X	GENERATION Y
	(Age 45 to 53)	(Age 16 to 45)	(Age present to 16)
CORE VALUES	<ul> <li>Optimism</li> <li>Team Orientation</li> <li>Personal Gratification</li> <li>Health and Wellness</li> <li>Personal Growth</li> <li>Youth</li> <li>Work</li> <li>Involvement</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Diversity</li> <li>Thinking Globally</li> <li>Balance</li> <li>Technology</li> <li>Fun</li> <li>Informality</li> <li>Self-reliance</li> <li>Pragmatism</li> </ul>	Optimism     Civic Duty     Confidence     Achievement     Sociability     Morality     Street smarts     Diversity
ON THE JOB	0 : 0:	A 1 4 1 1	
ASSETS	<ul> <li>Service Oriented</li> <li>Driven</li> <li>Willing to "go the extra mile"</li> <li>Good at relationships</li> <li>Want to please</li> <li>Good team player</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Adaptable</li> <li>Techno literate</li> <li>Independent</li> <li>Not intimidated by authority</li> <li>Creative</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Collective action</li> <li>Optimism</li> <li>Tenacity</li> <li>Heroic spirit</li> <li>Multitasking capabilities</li> <li>Technological savvy</li> </ul>
LIABILITIES	Not naturally "budget minded'  Uncomfortable with conflict Reluctant to go against peers May put process ahead of results Overly sensitive to feedback Judgmental of those who see things differently Self-centered	<ul> <li>Impatient</li> <li>Poor people skills</li> <li>Inexperienced</li> <li>Cynical</li> </ul>	Need for supervision and structure     Inexperience, particularly with handling difficult people issues
SEMINAL EVENTS	McCarthy Hearings     Rosa Parks incident     1st Nuclear Power plant     Civil Rights Act passed     Birth Control pill Introduced     Cuban Missile Crisis     John Glenn orbits earth     Assignations of Kennedy and King     Vietnam     1st Lunar landing     Woodstock     Kent State shootings	Women's Lib protest & Demo Munich terrorist incident Watergate Apple & Tandy PC Jonestown mass suicide Three mile Island Iran 66 hostages John Lennon shot Challenger disaster Stock market crash Fit 103 bombing Exxon Valdez spill Berlin Wall falls Desert Storm Rodney King beating & LA riots	Oklahoma City bombing     School yard shootings     Major advances in Technology     Clinton/Lewinsky     Columbine massacre

# FIGURE 7

A final example is integrity and honesty. James Youngquist, in an AWC paper entitled, American vs. U.S. Army Values: Direction of Society's Values and Implications for the 21 st Century Army documented, "Nearly one-third of students were willing to lie on a resume, job application, or job interview. A large majority admit to lying to parents, teachers, and significant others. This includes students at private high schools and religious colleges. ... The student's logic is simple and straightforward, everyone is doing it. Why should we put ourselves at an unfair disadvantage by being honest?" Neil Yamashiro, summarizing the common characteristics of Xers wrote, "[They] believe in getting what they can and will revert to situational ethics to do so and desire instant gratification without having to work for it." So how do these views fit with the current military professional's view of these terms especially as one serves as ambassadors of the U.S. on foreign soil? Neil Yamashiro writes, "To sum up thus far, Xers share the following common characteristics: cynical, independent, computer literate, and competitive." So, one should view figure 7 with an open mind. However, every American household and corporation is dealing with the effects of these differing values today. So how will this affect the military profession?

# Mixing Baby Boomers, "X" And "Y" Generations, and Current Military Leaderships

To sustain the strength of the current military profession, X and Y Generations are a necessity. The effects, although not prominent today, are slowly manifesting themselves within the ranks. Leonard Wong writes, "Organizations in the civilian sector have been forced to deal with conflicts between the Baby Boomer generation and Generation X and the Army is now discovering that it is no different." <sup>56</sup>

One of the first problems that must be overcome will be perceptions. Zemke, Raines, and Filipczak wrote, "Boomers view Xers as greedy and lazy, suspicious and self-serving, loners and cynics: all over generalizations and the work of stereotypes, and a negative eddy of wasted energy. Xers, for their part, see Boomers as obsessive, dictatorial, "my way or the highway," a little naïve, a little soft: again, stereotypical over generalizations, but nonetheless existent perceptions.<sup>57</sup> The root of these perceptions may be found within households; growing gaps between parents and their children. A 1999 Public Agenda poll sponsored by Ronald McDonald House Charities found that most Americans describe children and teens in negative terms. 53% of the general public and 58% of parents surveyed described children and teens as lazy and spoiled, etc.; over 70% of parents and the general public characterized today's children and teens as rude, irresponsible, and wild; almost 60% of teens, parents, and general public believe the next generation will not make America a better place; and approximately 30% of adults feel that kids are not learning values like honesty, respect, and responsibility. 58 These perceptions can probably be dealt with through education; but not on a one time basis. But the greater concern is when these perceptions are transferred into the military profession between older leaders and the younger subordinates they now command. Since many military leaders are

parents that possibly feel the same way as the poll suggest, does having a youth put on a uniform change the adult's perception?

Wong suggests it does not. He wrote, "Simply put, today's senior officers do not understand today's junior officers or their perspectives." But as leaders try to understand, more problems are created. Why? Zemke, Raines, and Filipczak suggest, Xer's need for feedback and flexibility, coupled with their hatred of close supervision, is but one of the many conundrums they present to [their] employers. The military is no different. As for the Y Generation, Zemke, Raines, and Filipczak suggest the "Y" generation has a new and easy attitude toward gender stereotyping and their place in time and space. They express doubt over the wisdom of traditional racial and sexual categorizing, and they have Internet pen pals in Asia who they can, and do, contact at any hour of the day and night. They are not confused by the international dateline or perplexed by relativity. In other words, mixing the generations in the military will continue to cause problems, and get worse, if leaders are not paying attention to this critical issue.

#### Assessing the Impact of the Core Values on the Military Profession's Leadership

Major differences in core values can have major consequences for the future military profession. Remember, values are derived from cultural norms. If, as one suggests, the large populations of youth that have strong positive cultural norms are diminishing, then the military profession will draw its future force from youth with different cultural norms. Schein claims that when new members are brought into a culture, they are either selected on the basis of the match between their values and those of the culture, or they are socialized to accept cultural values. One submits with the military's need for volunteers to satisfy its manning requirements, especially in times of war, Schein's selective approach for picking members to join a culture, in this case the military, does not work. Arguably, if American youth's cultural norms shift too much from what the current military profession seeks, the military profession itself will be forced to change to meet its demands for people.

Youths growing up with the quick TV and video solutions to life will struggle to listen to leaders that view life completely different. For example, can the military profession adapt to a culture that uses profanity as part of their everyday vocabulary? For most Baby Boomers, the term "bitch" when addressing another person is still considered profanity. But in many communities for the X and Y Generation the term has become a common part of their vocabulary. Should a leader tolerate this term in the military profession at any time when used to refer to a person of the opposite sex? On or off duty? Segal and Bourg, in a book entitled

"The Future of the Army Profession," wrote "sexual harassment is a common occurrence, especially crude and offensive behavior and unwanted attention." Interestingly in 2005, Jean Nash Johnson, a journalist reporting on drinking of college campuses for the Dallas News, revealed two startling Harvard School of Public Health figures. First between 1993 and 2001, women reported a 150% increase in date rapes and sexual assaults. Second, it was estimated that more than 100,000 women, ages 12 – 24, each year are forced to engage in sex while they were intoxicated. These are numbers from the X and Y generations.

If one accepts that the current military profession still has a problem with sexual harassment, consider the future profession with youths recruited from the public health figures sited above. In addition, consider a military profession made up of members that grew up in a TV and video world where this type of behavior is accepted or glamorized. Consider Neil Yamashiro's belief that, "Xers probably witnessed more acts of violence and murder than any other generation in history. Not only did they witness fictional acts of violence on TV, they also vicariously experienced riots, live-action crimes scenes, even wars via news mini-cams. This has helped them to become very freedom-minded, individualist, and self-absorbed, cynical." 65

Based on the above, keeping an organization focused on a common set of shared values is difficult, especially if the values are not formally taught and reinforced. Deth and Scarbrough, authors of *The Impact of Values* argued, "Existing values are not, however, simply replaced by other values. It is obvious that cherished values disappear gradually in advanced industrial society, thus the process is better described as a continuous development towards a more fragmented culture."

### The "Values Collision": Assessing the Strategic Impact

The United States military is one of America's critical pillars for upholding democracy in the United States. Additionally, it is the cornerstone of America's National Security Strategy and the National Strategy for Homeland Security. The military, in no small degree, preserves America, its government, and the American way of life. The Secretary of Defense acknowledged this in his 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review stating, "U.S. military strength is essential to achieving these goals, [to promote peace, sustain freedom, and encourage prosperity] as it assures friends and allies of an unwavering U.S. commitment to common interests." Additionally, he acknowledged, as does the President of the United States, that the U.S. Military is the security blanket for America. As such, the military plays a unique role in the world. It provides a general sense of stability and confidence, which is crucial to the

economic prosperity that benefits the world and warns others who would threaten the Nation's welfare or the welfare of U.S. allies and friends.<sup>68</sup>

Preserving America's military has always been a great responsibility. Past and present leaders have understood and carried this great weight of responsibility by instilling clear values, derived from our national values, into each successive generation of leaders. And for the most part, each generation believed in those values and dedicated themselves to protecting them for the next generation. But now, the military faces a new threat. This threat appeared to be unseen in the annals of American history; if seen, clearly undocumented. The new threat is a gap between America's newest generation's values and those of its current military. Mary Torgersen, in her paper entitled A Widening Values Gap between the U.S. Military and American Society suggested, "A significant gap between a large military and its society is unhealthy in a democracy. It is in our national interest to counteract this divergence."69 Further, Hechter, Nadel, and Michod surmised, "Democracy is often justified by its ability to provide policies that are more responsive to citizen's values than the policies provided by other systems of governance. But if the people really have no stable values then the justification of democracy is no longer available."70 So the broader implications of weakened values in America, especially when it begin to affect the professional military that protects it, is detrimental to the United States overall.

To reiterate the issue, one must consider the upcoming generations that will take on the task of protecting America and democracy. One must also consider the environment that shaped that generation. Considering all the things written prior in this paper, Neil Yamashiro wrote, "A major impact has been the faltering family. The family unit has traditionally been a key factor in transmitting stable cultural and moral values from generation to generation. However, the decline in the family structure, divorce, and other family oriented concerns are one of the five major problems facing the nation today. Today, statistics indicate that three marriages in every five end in divorce."71 So as the traditional values of today weaken, change, or are forsaken by the generations of tomorrow, so does the military profession as it draws people from the same generational groups. The results will be unacceptable. The tip of the iceberg of issues is slowly beginning to manifest itself today. Mary Torgersen aptly suggests this phenomenon commenting on statements by Admiral Stanley Arthur. Admiral Arthur commented on several notable incidents that supported his concerns of a pervasive elitism within the military rank and file that has resulted in a challenge to authority. The Admiral cited the following examples: the recent troubles with hate groups and skinheads, a medic who refused to serve under the United Nations command, and two Marines who declined to provide DNA samples. $^{72}$ 

There are other examples throughout the military profession, from the selling of classified documents, to the Abu Ghraib scandal. Where individuals of a latter generation acted or participated in events, the previous generation would never even contemplate. Why? The latter generation's views of right and wrong were markedly different than that of the senior leadership. Their values were different too. Consequently, reaction to the events they caused had strategic impacts on both the military profession and America itself.

#### Conclusion

Chaplain Geraldine Manning, in her paper entitled, The Military of Tomorrow: Military Values and America's Youth, wrote, "Values taught and lived in the military forces should be instilled in America's youth to prepare them for future military service. Ultimately these values will not only prepare them for military service but will also prepare them to become good citizens and leaders of our country."73 Somehow, the military profession must start a campaign, whether through lobbyist in congress or a separate program that sends military professionals upon retirement into America's school system, to spread the traditional values for the sake of the nation. The current values of our military profession are sound and enduring. Even successful businesses in America that have longevity recognize the need for strong values. David Brooks, in a paper entitled Values Based Organizations: How Does the Army Stack Up wrote, "First, core values must be enduring. Core values must transcend any aspect of organizational behavior. Companies that enjoy enduring success have core values that remain fixed while their business strategies and practices endlessly adapt to a changing world. Core values are resistant to change and are the unwavering "go to" principles the organization uses throughout the conduct of its business."<sup>74</sup> This "go-to" principle has kept the current military profession from swaying with each new generation's idea of right and wrong. Recognizably, quantifying the impact of values is difficult. Hechter, Nadel, and Michod suggesting the same stated, "Even though values unquestionably are difficult to measure, there can be no scientific warrant simply to ignore them."75

But for the sake of the military profession, and even for the sake of our United States , American's must not ignore the value of "values" in American society. One should always keep in mind the facts presented above and the Surgeon General's comments that maintain that the magnitude of serious violence occurring beneath the police radar should warn us that youth violence is a persistent problem demanding a focus on prevention. Instilling the military's values into America's youth is a form of prevention with major benefits to the future military

profession. In our initial training institutions, indications are this training has been diluted or is no longer taught due to trade offs in core curriculums and class tempo.

As for the military profession itself, one must remember the discussion on cultural norms. These norms become important when we consider Schein's suggestions that, "...what leaders consistently pay attention to communicate most clearly what their own priorities, goals, and assumptions are." What a leader pays attention to affects his or her ability to send a message using techniques of role modeling, teaching, or coaching especially to an audience that perceives the leader's actions are untrue or opposites of what's being portrayed. Consequently, efforts to select quality people for promotion, reward, or other favorable action will be looked upon with suspicion. Leaders must be on guard. Our future youth will increasingly not place the same values on the things the current military profession views as important. This mismatch will be the source of friction when favorable action or punishment is given out.

The military must begin a thorough study of the next generation and their cultural norms now. The findings of the study must be made accessible to the current military profession. In addition to being accessible, all service schools at every level should be required to incorporate the findings in their curriculum with ample time allotted for dialogue. Educational awareness is the answer. To ignore the issue will result in a future crisis between the leadership and its members. A crisis created unknowingly by younger military members and leaders, who simply speak, act, live, and handle situations differently than what is accepted within the current military profession. If the military profession can not find a way to address these future norms, Segal and Bourg may prove correct. They suggested, "To retain people, the armed forces must treat them in such a way that they are satisfied with their lives in the service. If individuals perceive that the Army is not a place where they are treated well, they will "vote with their feet." Once in the military, America's youth will not stick around for a second or third commitment. When they get out of the profession, they will influence another generation that might not volunteer for a term in the profession.

### **Endnotes**

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